OIPE JC181 OCT 01 2001 PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

REMARKS

The foregoing amendments do not introduce new matter. The amendments to the specification are principally to address clerical errors in the original text. The amendments to the claims and the new claims are supported by the original specification and drawings. Entry of these amendments prior to examination of this application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

At page 8, please replace the first paragraph (numbered paragraph 22) with the following:

As the article continues to slide, [is] it reaches the elongated forks that are at least partially extended, but preferably fully extended over the pallet. The article continues its travel along the extended forks until the article is situated directly above the pallet. The elongated forks are then retracted while the article is held in position over the pallet. When the forks are fully retracted, the article is sitting directly on the pallet and the loaded pallet is ready to be conveyed to another station by the second conveyor section.

At page 10, please replace the second paragraph (numbered paragraph 28) with the following:

One significant benefit of the present invention is that it is readily adaptable to transfer or load articles that include sheet material, such as cardboard sheets. Another benefit realized by the invention is that this transfer is accomplished without raising and/or lowering the article to be loaded [or] on the pallet to carry the article.

At page 13, please replace the second paragraph (numbered paragraph 40) with the following:

The transfer apparatus **10** can include a pusher mechanism that in the illustrated embodiment includes a pusher bar **14** propelled by a pusher drive **15**. The pusher bar and drive can be of generally any known

configuration. The object of the pusher bar is to propel the article **A** from the first [conveyer] conveyor C_1 or from the input portion **12** onto a pallet **P** sitting on the second conveyor C_2. Again, the pusher bar **14** and drive **15** can be configured to integrate cleanly with the conveyor section C_1. For instance, in one embodiment the conveyor C_1 can be a continuous belt conveyor. The transfer apparatus **10** can include a leading roller **18** and weldment beams **20** to support the article **A** as it is propelled from the conveyor C_1 onto the transfer apparatus. The support frame can further include an array of beams or rollers to support the article at the input portion **12** of the transfer apparatus. Alternatively, the transfer apparatus can be integrated directly into a roller conveyor constructions with the support frame **11** integrated into the support frame for the roller conveyor C_1. The pusher bar **14**, of course, is disposed above the conveyor to act directly on the article **A**.

At page 14, please replace the third paragraph (numbered paragraph 42) with the following:

In accordance with one aspect of the invention, the pusher bar **14** pushes the article **A** across the skid beams **27**. In a specific embodiment, the beams are formed of [stainless] steel to provide a relatively smooth surface for the article **A** to slide across. Most preferably, the beams **27** have a rounded or curved upper surface **28** to minimize the frictional contact with the article **A** travelling thereacross.

At page 14, please replace the fourth paragraph (numbered paragraph 43) with the following:

In an important feature of the present invention, a plurality of extension forks **30** are interleaved between the skid beams **27**. Preferably, a greater number of beams **27** than forks **30** are provided. The number of beams and forks that are provided is dependent upon the weight of the article **A** being transferred onto the pallet. As shown in **FIG. 3**, each of the extension forks **30** can terminate in a beveled tip **31**. In addition,

At page 17, please replace the first paragraph (numbered paragraph 50) with the following:

As described above, the free ends of the extension forks **30** are supported by an idler roller assembly **33**. In the preferred embodiment, a corresponding number of idler rollers **56** are mounted on an idler shaft **57**. The idler shaft **57** is rotatably supported by the frame **11** in a known manner, such as by bushings or bearings mounted within the frame and supporting the opposite ends of the shaft **57**.

OIPE JC101 OCT 0 1 2001 PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claim 3 and 5-8 as follows:

3. (amended) The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each of said number of elongated beams includes an upper [a curved] surface defining said stationary transfer surface.

5. (amended) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of said number of elongated beams includes an upper [a curved] surface defining said stationary transfer surface.

6. (amended) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of said second plurality of elongated forks includes an upper [a curved] surface configured to support the article as it is pushed by said pusher mechanism thereacross.

7. (amended) The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said upper [curved] surface of each of said second plurality of elongated forks is situated at or below said stationary transfer surface.

8. (amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said extension fork assembly includes means for [a roller assembly] supporting a free end of each of said number of elongated forks, and said drive mechanism is connected to each of said number of forks at an opposite end thereof.

Please add the following as new claims 16-18:

-- 16. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said upper surface of said number of elongated beams is curved. --

-- 17. The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said upper surface of said number of elongated beams is curved. --

-- 18. The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said means for supporting includes a roller assembly. --